

REMARKS

The present amendment is submitted in conjunction with a Continued Prosecution Application, filed as a result of the final rejection of claims 14-25 dated December 10, 2002.

On Friday, March 07, 2003, the Applicants' representative conducted a telephone interview with the Examiner, in which proposed limitations for independent claim 14 were discussed. The Applicants' representative proposed to amend claim 14 to add that "at least one theme or image is formed on the at least one visible surface" to the last line of claim 14. The Examiner and the Applicants' representative also discussed that this theme or image is formed by the structuring of the material layer itself.

The Examiner concurred that this limitation did distinguish the present invention over the art of record, none of which discloses or suggests providing a theme or image, i.e., a picture, on the visible layer that was formed by the structure of the material layer.

The Applicants' representative indicated that the Applicants intended to file a CPA in the case, adopting the agreed-upon language in claim 14.

Therefore, in this Preliminary Amendment, the Applicants have amended claim 14 to add the specific wording discussed by the Examiner and the Applicants' attorney, relating to the formation of the theme or image from the structure of the material layer, i.e. on the visible surface of the ornamental stone.

The Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention, as defined in amended claim 14, is neither anticipated by nor made obvious by the art of record.

In light of the foregoing amendment and arguments in support of patentability, the Applicants respectfully submit that this application stands in condition for allowance. Action to this end is courteously solicited.

Should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, the undersigned would very much welcome a telephone call in order to discuss appropriate claim language that will place the application into condition for allowance.

Respectfully Submitted,

Robert - seck

Robert W. Becker, Reg. No. 26,255
for applicant(s)

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE:

14. An ornamental stone, comprising:

a body, said body comprising a natural or synthetic stone, said stone being suitable only for technical or industrial purposes, wherein said stone has at least one visible surface adapted to serve as a support for a structured material layer, and wherein at least one theme or image is formed from the structure of the material layer.